

Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst

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*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
Silk Road Studies Program*

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THE CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS ANALYST

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Analytical Articles require a three to four sentence Key Issue introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful judgment supported with concrete examples. The ideal length of analytical articles is between 1,100 and 1,500 words. The articles are structured as follows:

KEY ISSUE: A short 75-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: 300-450 words of analysis about what has led up to the event or issue and why this issue is critical to the region. Include background information about the views and experiences of the local population.

IMPLICATIONS: 300-450 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

CONCLUSIONS: 100-200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

Field Reports focus on a particular news event and what local people think about the event. Field Reports address the implications the event or activity analyzed for peoples' lives and their communities. Field Reports do not have the rigid structure of Analytical Articles, and are shorter in length, averaging ca. 700-800 words.

Those interested in joining *The Analyst's* pool of authors to contribute articles, field reports, or contacts of potential writers, please send your CV to: <scornell@jhu.edu> and suggest some topics on which you would like to write.

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TURKMENISTAN AND IRAN DROP LEGAL BOMBSHELLS AT CASPIAN SEA SUMMIT

Robert M. Cutler

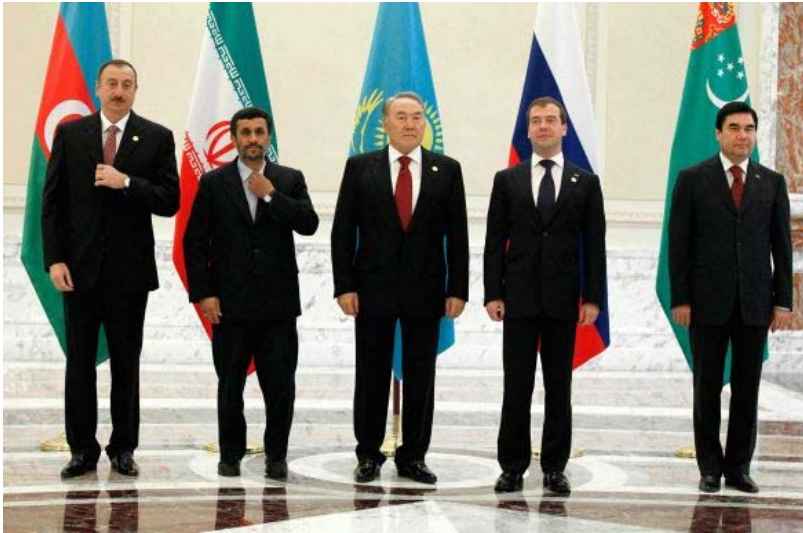
The unsettled legal status of the Caspian Sea has put brakes on the construction of undersea pipelines. Last month the third summit of all five littoral countries at the head-of-state level took place in Baku. Not only did Turkmenistan for the first time declare that undersea pipelines could be built without the approval of all littoral states, opening the way for such a pipeline to Azerbaijan. Also, Iran expanded its claim beyond the 20 percent of the Caspian Sea upon which it has heretofore insisted, yet without saying how far beyond or upon what justification. The others in attendance took the new claim as an attempt to sabotage the possibility of any agreement whatsoever.

BACKGROUND: Through the end of 1991, the Caspian Sea's legal regime was governed mainly by two pre-World War II agreements: a 1921 treaty between the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR), since the USSR was established only in 1922, and Persia, since Iran did not then exist either; and a 1940 treaty signed between the USSR and Iran. None of these pre-World War II treaties established any maritime boundaries. Only a 10-nautical-mile (all miles in this article are nautical miles) coastal-waters zone for fishing was defined; yet it was not even specified as a "fisheries zone." None of the treaties defined a territorial sea and, still more notably, none referred to rights over offshore resources under the seabed.

The several Soviet republics established an administrative division of the Caspian for certain domestic purposes, but since these were not maritime boundaries *per se*, the post-Soviet international-law status of that division is questionable. The participant-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) agreed in a 20 March 1992 document that they would "guarantee the fulfillment of international obligations arising from treaties and agreements of the former USSR".

However, it was still necessary to negotiate, sign, and ratify the Lisbon Protocol (23 May 1992) to the START I Treaty in order actually to bind Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to its terms. No such binding document exists in respect of the post-Soviet Caspian Sea legal regime. It is possible that Russia is theoretically bound by the pre-existing treaties; yet they are clearly inadequate to the present day, for they do not take into account the existence of five littoral states.

Together with an earlier 1935 treaty, the 1940 treaty defined the Caspian Sea as a "Soviet and Iranian sea," although that is not identical with the "joint use" legal regime suggested by Russia (and supported by Iran) in the early 1990s. For the purpose of instituting a joint-use regime, Russia proposed in a late 1994 draft treaty to establish a 20-mile "zone of influence" for each coastal state along with a general governing board for the whole sea comprising all littoral states. In December 1996, Russia changed its position and called instead for 45-mile exclusive national zones with a joint-use zone in the center of the sea. Iran generally supported the Russian proposals.



(Dmitry Astakhov / AP/RIA-Novosti)

IMPLICATIONS: Russia and Kazakhstan signed agreements in July 1998 and May 2002 that delimited their sectors of the Caspian Sea with specific reference to sovereign rights to subsoil resources. The technique used for delimitation was a standard international-legal principle called the “modified median line.” The arrangement has worked so well that Russia and Kazakhstan are even cooperating in the development of three offshore fields that straddled their median line before it was modified. In November 2001 and February 2003, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan signed agreements invoking the same principle for delimiting the contiguous segments of their respective sectors; then in May 2003, all three countries signed yet another agreement based upon the same principle for delimiting their adjacent sectors, allocating 19 percent each to Russia and Azerbaijan and 29 percent to Kazakhstan.

Following Russia’s 1996 proposal, and after Azerbaijan’s attempt later in the decade to survey the Alov hydrocarbon deposit in its offshore sector that Iran halted through the presence of military force and the threat of its use, Iran changed its position so as to explicitly claim 20 percent of the seabed (and resources

under it), based upon a demand for an “equal” (sometimes translated “equitable”) division. According to standard norms of international law, Iran would be entitled to 13 percent of the seabed and subsoil resources, following the trace of the Astarah-Hosseingholi line, named for the populated settlements at the northwestern and northeastern extremities of Iran’s Caspian Sea coastline. Days before the Baku summit last month, the new Iranian negotiator stated publicly that Iran’s “aim goes further than this [20%] limit” but without saying how much further. This was the new Iranian position that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad defended in Baku.

The antagonism of this new position did nothing to ameliorate Teheran’s relations with Moscow, at the first high-level meeting between the two governments’ representatives since Russia declined to transfer the S-300 air defense missiles to Iran after the latter refused to cooperate with authorized international organizations in the verification of its nuclear program. The bilateral talks received only the most summary coverage in the Russian press, where an assistant to the Russian president described them as “completely open.”

As for Turkmenistan, its new position only confirms the evolution of bilateral Azerbaijani-Turkmenistani relations since 2007. That it bodes well for the Nabucco project is suggested by the announcement by the head of BP-Azerbaijan, less than two weeks after the summit, that it will build a new pipeline through Azerbaijan and Georgia into Turkey capable of handling up to 16 billion cubic meters

per year (16 bcm/y), the projected full-stage output of the Shah Deniz Two development in Azerbaijan's offshore, in addition to the 8 bcm/y pipeline already existing. This is large enough to accommodate a certain volume from Turkmenistan, if Azerbaijan continues to diversify its Shah Deniz export destinations.

Iran's relations with Turkmenistan are also strained, despite the latter's agreement for increased sales of gas to the former for domestic consumption in the northeast of the country. The Turkmenistani press is one of the last in the former Soviet area that it is possible to read using unreconstructed Sovietological techniques. It is therefore no accident that the official Turkmenistani government photograph of Berdimuhammedov's meeting with Ahmadinejad shows the latter to significant disadvantage, cringing almost plaintively while the former locks his eyes with a self-assured stare. Moreover, this contrasts strikingly with the smiling and animated expressions worn by Berdimuhammedov and his host, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, in the official Turkmenistani photograph of his being received by the latter in Baku. In Turkmenistan today, the choice of such photographs remains a significant indicator of the nature of relations with foreign states.

CONCLUSIONS: Until this year, two summits of the five littoral countries of the Caspian Sea had taken place at the head-of-state level, one in Ashgabat in 2001 and one in Teheran in 2007. In Baku, a general framework was endorsed for elaborating a (non-energy) security cooperation agreement covering such issues as human trafficking, organized crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism. However, the summit's real significance lay in the evolution

of Turkmenistan's and Iran's positions on the stakes in the definition of the Caspian Sea's international legal status and in the results of the various bilateral meetings in its margins, particularly between the leaders of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, and also Russia and Iran.

Whether the Caspian Sea is considered an "international sea," in which case the 1958 and 1982 Law of the Sea Conventions would apply, each state could claim full jurisdiction within 12 miles of the shoreline and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) over an additional 200 miles; or whether it is considered an "inland lake," in which case not only the subsoil resources but also the waters would have to be strictly divided among the littoral states, excluding even the right of innocent passage for vessels unless explicitly specified. In neither case does the specific type of regime (joint-use or otherwise) automatically follow.

The Caspian Sea basin is evolving a unique *sui generis* regime tailored to its specific situation. The established bilateral and multilateral agreements among Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, as well as the *de facto* understanding between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, are the facts on the ground that subsequent diplomatic developments will rationalize in terms of any future international legal regime.

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OSCE: IS KAZAKHSTAN CAPABLE OF RECONFIGURING THE SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN EURASIA?

Rafis Abazov

The OSCE summit in Astana on December 1-2 concluded Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship and was designed to finalize the results of the year-long foray to reinvigorate this Euro-Atlantic body. Many international experts including Kazakhstan's policy makers have been divided over the evaluation of the goals and outcomes. One group believes that the main goal of Kazakhstan's diplomacy at the OSCE was to focus on the regional security issues and to reconfigure the security architecture in the region, making sure that Central Asia is not marginalized in the European security strategy. The other group believes that Kazakhstan's main goal was no more than placing the country on the international map as an outspoken and visible player.

BACKGROUND: When representatives of 56 member states came together in December 2010 for the first time in 11 years, the event became, in President Nazarbayev's words, "the first OSCE summit of the 21st century". The Kazakh policy makers put great efforts into making the event happen and ensuring that the member states would support their initiatives. Indeed, for Kazakhstan it was probably the last chance to use the power of diplomacy to cement the security architecture in the Eurasian region and to make sure that Central Asia is not marginalized in European security thinking. It was especially important as other international organizations have failed to prove effective on security issues.

In fact, several intra-regional initiatives – from the Central Asian Union to the Central Asian Forum – have fallen apart due to internal rivalries, competing agendas and institutional weaknesses of the organizations, with the member states not being able to achieve a consensus even in the face of severe security threats from the instability in Afghanistan. On a number of occasions, the tensions between

Central Asian states boiled up to the level that they closed their borders and exchanged tough diplomatic statements – even to the point of moving their troops closer to borders with neighboring states.

It is true that NATO could become an important player in the security issues, especially in the context of the recent NATO summit in Lisbon and its newly assured commitment to work on stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. Stabilization was also a number one priority for Astana. However, NATO's commitment to Afghanistan and Central Asia is seriously undermined by very low public support for the war in many European countries and by recent discussions about accelerated NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan by July 2011. In addition, some political circles in Moscow are still very suspicious of any NATO actions in the Eurasian space, especially a long-term presence in Central Asia. For this and many other reasons, it is impractical if not impossible to build the security architecture in Central Asia around NATO. Even a hypothetical direct



Kazakhstani involvement with NATO would jeopardize the country's relations with both of its large neighbors, China and Russia.

Another multilateral institution, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), has been a possible candidate for building security architecture for Kazakhstan and Central Asia. In fact, it has proven instrumental in solving major security problems such as border disputes. It also provided diplomatic tools for developing new security architecture for member states in the post-Soviet era. However, after its initial success, the SCO has shown signs of institutional and organizational weakness. Both China and Russia have unsuccessfully sought to politicize the SCO to their own political advantage – for example, by trying to secure political support for China's heavy-handed actions against a separatist movement in the Xinjiang province. These actions were not well received in Astana and other Central Asian capitals. Other attempts to invigorate the SCO have brought scant success as its members struggle to compromise on many issues and to overcome their suspicions and differences.

The Russian-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has also proved incapable of forming the cornerstone for building security and stability in the region. In its early stages, it was in some ways successful in stabilizing the situation, such as by helping to fight off militant Islamic insurgency groups with ties to the Taliban in 1999-2001. However, lately it has become quite inactive and ineffective and it was not able to initiate any security actions during the

tragic events in Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 2010.

IMPLICATIONS: Kazakhstan's leadership envisioned the OSCE chairmanship as an opportunity to breach the gap in security issues and, in Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev's words, "to modernize and strengthen the [OSCE] in order to adapt it to the present-day reality". In fact, the very strengths of the OSCE – conflict prevention and conflict resolution, the wealth of experience and expertise in institution-building in post-conflict environments, and an institutional platform for small and medium-sized member states to deal with big powers on a more or less equal basis – are of great value for all member states. This is especially true for the states closest to two dangerous conflict zones – Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Therefore, Astana managed to achieve several objectives during its OSCE chairmanship, which have wider implications for the emerging security architecture in the Eurasian region. First, during 2010 the OSCE has indeed grown in importance as a useful venue for security

dialogue in the region and as one of the area's key institutions in conflict resolution. This became especially apparent during the political crisis and bloody conflicts in the spring and summer in Kyrgyzstan. Under Kazakhstan's chairmanship, the OSCE greatly contributed to stabilizing Kyrgyzstan, and helped to conduct a constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. Second, the summit of the heads of states in Astana reinvigorated the prestige and international standing of the organization itself. Symbolically, this meeting was held almost immediately after the NATO meeting in Lisbon. Both NATO and the OSCE reconfirmed their commitment to stabilizing one of the most complex conflicts in today's world – the war in Afghanistan. Third, the adopted “Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards Security Community” revived much-needed debates and discussions not only on the future of the organization but also on new approaches to resolving old conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh) and developing a more comprehensive approach in dealing with “the human, economic and environmental, political and military dimensions of security”. Fourth, from the point of view of Kazakhstan's and other Central Asian states, the summit, which was for the first time held in the Central Asian region, brought greater attention to this part of the world and with it greater OSCE commitment to stabilizing the region

CONCLUSION: From the point of view of Kazakhstan's government, the main value of the OSCE has been that it has proved to be a useful and probably the only framework for discussing various security-related issues without taking sides and without jeopardizing relations with competing individual powers or groups of countries. Though during the last few years the standing and authority of the OSCE

has faded considerably, it could become a valuable multilateral institution where Kazakhstan could voice its agenda and discuss security issues. This would be true especially if the organization is able to reinvigorate and reinvent itself. The turbulent year of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship has illustrated that the region still faces a number of security challenges, both traditional and non-conventional. Not only did the developments in Kyrgyzstan show the strengths of the organization, they also exposed its weaknesses and flaws. Therefore, it is extremely important to work carefully on the future of the OSCE. First, Lithuania, which will take over the OSCE chairmanship next year, should continue paying greater attention to building OSCE capacities in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Second, the OSCE should undergo some organizational and institutional transformation, as was discussed during the summit, in order to address future conflicts and challenges in the Euro-Atlantic region more effectively. Third, the OSCE should probably think about the widening of the concept of security and should prepare itself to deal with new non-conventional challenges and to cooperate with other organizations in dealing with old problems.

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DAGESTAN'S GOVERNMENT SUGGESTS VOLUNTEER MILITIAS TO COUNTER LOCAL INSURGENCY

Kevin Daniel Leahy

The situation in Dagestan is becoming increasingly grim. Russia's leadership has started to complain about President Magomedislam Magomedov's failure to jump-start the republic's economy; meanwhile, Magomedov blames local security services for their failure to provide a favourable investment climate by stabilizing the security situation in Dagestan. Amid this latest round of finger-pointing, Magomedov has set forth a controversial proposal that would see volunteer militias, comprised of native Dagestanis, tasked with tackling the rebel organization in the republic. However, the social conditions in Dagestan and the Kremlin's limited patience with Magomedov suggest such a replication of Kadyrov's counter-terrorism tactics will be difficult to implement.

BACKGROUND: During a meeting with Alexander Khloponin in early November, Dmitri Medvedev exhorted his representative to the North Caucasus Federal District (SKFO) to assess "how work is going and [how] the individual leaders of territorial entities are handling their responsibilities". Any regional leader not living up to his responsibilities "should not remain in his post", Medvedev declared. At the same meeting Medvedev pointedly criticised Dagestan's leadership for the slow pace of economic development in the republic. "You are working slowly; everything should be carried out more actively", the Russian president complained.

Medvedev is growing increasingly frustrated with President Magomedislam Magomedov's failure to curb the rebel insurgency in Dagestan and his consequent inability to stimulate economic growth. Medvedev's annoyance has been reflected in a series of harsh remarks he has directed against both Khloponin and Magomedov, both of whom have yet to see out a full year in their respective portfolios.

Magomedov, who was appointed president of Dagestan by Medvedev in February, has suffered a fraught first ten months in office. His plan to stimulate economic growth in Dagestan through attracting inward investment has been thwarted by the increasingly brazen activities of Dagestan's insurgent movement. The campaign of violence organized by this constituency has discouraged potential investors from committing to Dagestan's economy. Magomedov has repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction with the law enforcement agencies' inability to curtail the activities of the rebel movement.

Even as he struggles to contend with this unfavorable state of affairs, it has become clear that Magomedov does not enjoy the full confidence of the Russian president. It is no secret that Medvedev, and other senior members of the presidential administration, originally intended to appoint Magomed Abdullayev, a former university classmate of the Russian president, as leader of Dagestan. Ultimately, Abdullayev's bid for the presidency was derailed by his lack of administrative experience. While his admiration for



Magomedsalam Magomedov (Caucasian Knot)

Abdullayev's leadership qualities remains undiminished, Medvedev concluded at length that Abdullayev would benefit from an apprenticeship as chairman of Dagestan's government.

Despite the fact that he was obviously not President Medvedev's first choice for the post, and despite the fact that his political authority is far more limited than the title of his job would suggest, Magomedov has managed to accrue some notable political achievements during his ten months in office. He has steered the country through two rounds of potentially destabilizing municipal elections, in March and in October of this year. He has also managed to re-organize Dagestan's political system without upsetting the region's delicate ethnic balance.

IMPLICATIONS: These achievements have been overshadowed by the activities of Dagestan's rebel movement. Magomedov's response to this increasingly volatile situation, other than upbraiding his interior ministry, has been to propose the establishment of pro-government, volunteer militias in Dagestan. These militias would be armed by the

government in Makhachkala and would take the form of battalions assigned to the republic's most troublesome localities.

Each battalion (two battalions are currently envisaged) would be tasked with taking the fight to militants operating within its own jurisdiction. The government official most closely associated with this initiative is First Deputy Prime Minister Rizwan Kurbanov. "We expect the local personnel to be more effective because, unlike the federal troops, they know all the

roads in the mountains and can tell the difference between traditional Islam believers and the extremists even by their appearance," Kurbanov explained. Approval for this initiative has already been sought and received from the Kremlin. Dagestan's leadership hopes that this initiative, in tandem with a selective amnesty for militants and a government purchase scheme for illegally-held firearms, will help to slow the insurgency's momentum.

Like the four ethno-battalions presently operating in Chechnya, the Dagestani battalions will function under the auspices of Russia's Interior Ministry. In reality, however, it is clear that Magomedov and Kurbanov expect these battalions to report directly to them. The Magomedov-Kurbanov initiative reveals a great deal about the respective mindsets of the Dagestani authorities and their counterparts in Moscow at this juncture. Firstly, the initiative suggests that Magomedov, who has routinely expressed his dissatisfaction with the performance of local law enforcement agencies, has concluded that he cannot rely upon Dagestan's Interior Ministry to prosecute

an effective counter-insurgency campaign against the rebel organization. Secondly, the Kremlin's acquiescence to this plan suggests that Russian decision makers are ready to deploy the same counter-insurgency strategy in Dagestan as has been used in neighboring Chechnya over the past ten years.

The strategy in Chechnya has involved four ethno-battalions, each comprised almost entirely of ethnic Chechens, undertaking counter-insurgency operations against their rebellious countrymen with assistance from the Russian military and Russian Special Forces. At a micro level, this strategy also involved members of these battalions harassing family members of suspected militants. In dozens of instances, people have been illegally abducted and imprisoned by militiamen with the goal of increasing the psychological pressure on their wayward relative(s) to surrender to the authorities. Are these the rules of engagement Magomedov and Kurbanov propose for their new paramilitary force? Both men have been noticeably coy regarding the exact functions these new battalions will be expected to perform. It is also unclear how this initiative will be reconciled with the poly-ethnic nature of society in Dagestan. For example, will one battalion be composed exclusively of ethnic Kumyks, another of ethnic Dargins, a third of ethnic Laks, etc.? Or will they instead be mixed battalions with members of all, or most, ethnic groups represented? Should these battalions be mono-ethnic in composition, will they be expected to operate in localities where another

ethnic group is predominant? These questions have not yet been answered by Magomedov and Kurbanov.

CONCLUSIONS: It is easy to understand why Magomedov, Kurbanov and their superiors in Moscow might view the counter-insurgency campaign carried out in Chechnya over the past decade as an example of how the rebel movement in Dagestan ought to be dealt with. Chechnya is more stable today than it has been at any time since the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the counter-insurgency strategy in Chechnya, at least since 2004, has been dependent on Ramzan Kadyrov, a flamboyant caudillo-style leader who has been willing and able to employ the most brutal tactics against Chechnya's rebel constituency. Kadyrov has been termed the "indigenous key to success" in the Kremlin's counter-insurgency campaign in Chechnya. Kurbanov, it should be noted, displays a photograph of Kadyrov prominently in his office and is a self-professed admirer of the counter-insurgency measures undertaken by Kadyrov in Chechnya. While Kurbanov admires Kadyrov personally, the prevailing social conditions in Dagestan militate against the successful replication of Kadyrov's counter-insurgency campaign there. It is also uncertain how much more time the Kremlin is willing to give Magomedov and Kurbanov to redeem the security situation in the republic.

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DECLARATION ADOPTED AT ASTANA SUMMIT CALLS FOR CONTINUING TALKS ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Haroutiun Khachatrian

During the December 1-2 OSCE summit held in Astana, a separate document about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was adopted, which largely expressed the OSCE's ambition to maintain the status quo in the conflict and prevent the situation from deteriorating further. This implies that Nagorno-Karabakh is considered the most serious conflict on the OSCE's territory. However, the Azerbaijani and Armenian positions voiced during the summit reconfirmed that the OSCE's ambitions for conflict resolution do not match its capabilities. The positions of the conflicting parties remain far apart; underscoring the risk that Nagorno-Karabakh may not only remain an unresolved conflict, but may see a future return to military violence.

BACKGROUND: The OSCE summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on December 1-2 failed to reach its principal goal; to negotiate a universal plan for the settlement of conflicts in the organization's territory. Instead, a non-binding declaration named the "Astana Commemorative Declaration" was adopted. In the document, the unresolved conflicts on OSCE territory are addressed extensively, but the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh was the only one to be awarded a special document during the summit. On the first day of the summit, a five-page joint declaration concerning Nagorno-Karabakh was adopted, which was signed by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the representatives of the Minsk Group co-chairs; Russia (represented by President Dmitri Medvedev), the U.S. (represented by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton) and France, represented by Prime Minister Francois Fillon. This declaration confirmed the commitment of the parties to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict based on the principles of Helsinki Final Act and the UN Charter. The co-chairs also called for additional steps to strengthen the

ceasefire and carry out confidence-building measures.

In their speeches at the summit after the declaration on Nagorno-Karabakh was signed, Presidents Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Serzh Sargsyan of Armenia reiterated their previous mutually exclusive positions on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, the former claiming that "Nagorno-Karabakh is a historic part of Azerbaijan", and the latter claiming that "Nagorno Karabakh has no future within Azerbaijan". Thus, the summit largely confirmed the current status quo around this conflict, as well as the necessity of continued negotiations, which have been ongoing under the auspices of the OSCE since the early 1990s.

This is largely considered a diplomatic failure on the part of Azerbaijan, which has sought a quick change of the current status quo while Armenian forces control not only Nagorno-Karabakh itself but also seven Azerbaijani territories beyond it. First, Azerbaijan, which formally does not exclude a return to armed conflict in order to regain control over Nagorno-Karabakh, had to sign a document



However, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton said in her speech in Astana: “Let me reiterate ... that the foundation of any lasting and fair settlement [in Nagorno-Karabakh] must be the Helsinki principles as well as the six elements articulated by Presidents Medvedev, Sarkozy, and Obama ... These proposed elements were conceived as an integrated whole and any attempt to select some

elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution.”

stressing the necessity of seeking a peaceful and negotiated solution to the problem. This was a consequence of the OSCE principle of “indivisible security”, which was again confirmed by the Astana Commemorative Declaration.

Second, Azerbaijan, which has made intense efforts recently to include other international fora in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution process had to sign the Astana Commemorative Declaration which read: “Increased efforts should be made to resolve existing conflicts in the OSCE area in a peaceful and negotiated manner, within agreed formats...”.

Third, Azerbaijan has always sought settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of one selected principle of the Helsinki Act, that of “territorial integrity”, lowering the value of the other two, namely the right to self-determination and non-use of force. This is official Baku’s most commonly used argument for its claim to Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan.

elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution.”

IMPLICATIONS: The OSCE summit in Astana apparently failed to give new impetus to the efforts toward settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is one of the oldest unresolved conflicts in Eurasia. The summit largely reconfirmed that no international body, including the interested superpowers taking part in the attempts to settle this conflict as mediators, can reach any solution unless the conflicting parties agree to it. The two countries involved in this conflict have proven unable to make any substantial compromise in their positions. Thus, the conflict has remained destructive to the region’s politics and economy throughout the 16 years since the cease-fire was established.

The principal danger of this conflict is that a resumption of military means remains a distinct possibility. If such violence would recur, it would in all likelihood be initiated by Azerbaijan, since Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh de facto authorities are satisfied with

the prevailing status-quo, and Baku has over the past few years become increasingly bellicose in its statements on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Three principal factors would seriously increase the risk of resumed violence on Azerbaijan's part. These are, first, a failure of Azerbaijan's diplomatic efforts regarding the conflict. Second, a Turkish move to open its land border and/or lifting its trade embargo on Armenia, ending the two-side embargo in favor of Azerbaijan which has been imposed since 1993. In recent months, there have been numerous signs from Turkish high-ranking officials that Turkey might improve its relations with Armenia. Third, any instability or violence in neighboring Iran can provoke a resumption of violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

In addition, the political climate in Armenia is becoming less and less favorable to making concessions for conflict resolution due to a growth in extremist movements. Whereas Sargsyan could formerly speak openly about the possibility of withdrawing Armenian forces from the territories around Nagorno-Karabakh in exchange for Azerbaijan's recognition of the region's independence, the movements opposing the return of any territory to Azerbaijan have in recent months become increasingly active, terming these territories "liberated" rather than "occupied". At Astana, Sargsyan even went so far as to threaten diplomatic recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh's

independence in case of Azerbaijani-initiated hostilities.

In sum, the chance of finding a final solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is becoming increasingly distant. The negotiations may become even more difficult now as Sargsyan has reportedly set certain preconditions for further meetings with his Azerbaijani counterpart, in particular demanding guarantees that Aliyev refrains from making controversial political statements immediately following the meetings. In short, the negotiations are likely to move at an even slower pace in the future.

CONCLUSIONS: During the OSCE Summit in Astana, the main actors of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict signed a declaration pledging to renew their efforts to reach a solution to the conflict on the basis of previously adopted documents, primarily on the statements of Presidents Medvedev, Sarkozy, and Obama, at L'Aquila on July 10, 2009, and at Muskoka on June 26, 2010. The document also contains a call to strengthen the ceasefire and carry out confidence-building measures. The outcome of the summit nevertheless indicates that the present difficulties in negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh will continue. The positions of the conflicting parties remain far apart, and the danger of renewed violence in the future will not be alleviated in the foreseeable future.

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FIELD REPORTS

BLAST IN BISHKEK RAISES KYRGYZ SECURITY CONCERNS

Joldosh Osmonov

A recent bomb blast in central Bishkek and a skirmish in the city of Osh alarmed the public and again raised security challenges to the top of the agenda in Kyrgyzstan. The authorities relate these incidents to the increased activity of terrorist organizations in the country and claim to have the situation under control. However, controversial statements of the law enforcement bodies regarding the responsible for the recent incidents cause concern among the public.

On November 30, an early-morning blast shook Bishkek. A homemade explosive device was installed near the city's largest sports complex, which is used as the main venue for the trial against former President Bakiev and his allies, charged with the mass murder of protestors during April 7 events. A court hearing, which was scheduled for the same morning the blast occurred, was cancelled. As a result of the explosion, which allegedly was aimed at causing panic among the public, three people were injured, including two policemen.

The explosion was hastily termed a terrorist act by the Kyrgyz authorities and connected with the recent series of police raids and arrests of an alleged group of conspirators who were ostensibly planning terrorist attacks across the country.

Right after the blast, the deputy head of the Kyrgyz National Security Service (KNSS) Kolbay Musaev, organized a press conference stating that a group of 39 people were planning to organize more than 30 terrorist acts in the cities of Bishkek and Osh. Other terrorist acts were planned to take place in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan, aimed to destabilize the situation in the region and the country in general. According to Musaev, this group is closely

affiliated with the Islamic Jihad Union and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), both international terrorist organizations. The "list of 39" includes those who were killed and arrested as a result of the special operations conducted during the previous two months, he concluded.

It is notable that one day prior to the Bishkek incident, Kyrgyz security services and police jointly conducted a special operation in central Osh in the south of the country. The residents of the targeted house opened fire, leaving four security officers injured. The exchange of fire lasted for a few hours and spread panic among the Osh residents, whose memories of bloody ethnic clashes in June are still fresh. At the end of the operation, four armed people were killed including Farhat Nurmatov, an imam of the local mosque, who allegedly led the group. Two other suspects were arrested. The raid discovered a number of automatic weapons, grenades and explosives. A week before the incident, Minister of Interior Zarylbek Rysaliev, announced that nine people suspected of planning terrorist acts had been arrested, while the security services claimed that two leaders of terrorist groups were detained in early October.

Interestingly, there are two official versions regarding the affiliations of the group behind the blast and other possible terrorist acts. Whereas the KNSS leadership retains the position that the group is related to international terrorist organizations like the IMU, the Interior Minister and Marat Imankulov, Secretary of the Security Council, claim that the group is strictly local and has a "nationalist-separatist nature". "These people are nationalist-separatists and their main aim is to discredit the

democratic reforms by destabilizing the situation in the country”, the Security Council Secretary stated.

In the meantime, the suspects arrested during the Osh incident are giving their first testimonies. They have confessed that the group was planning to conduct a series of acts in Bishkek and major southern cities, according to the investigation group. “Moreover, the suspects named some of the former Kyrgyz Parliament members who allegedly are involved in the recent incidents”, the investigators claim while refusing to make the names public in the interest of the investigation.

The opinions of political and military experts are also divided over the perpetrators’ nature and reasons for the explosion. General Artur Medetbekov, former deputy head of the KNSS, related the incident to the one-day visit of the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Bishkek on

December 2. It could be an act of intimidation and an attempt to demonstrate the weakness and failure of the current government, Medetbekov stated. The general claimed that the perpetrators could be ethnic Uzbeks who fled to Afghanistan and Pakistan after the June events and, after being trained in terrorist camps, aimed to conduct such attacks on the territory of the country.

On the other hand, some experts claim that the blast near the place of the trial against the leaders of the previous regime was aimed at disrupting the court hearings. According to this version, the incident was paid and organized by those who were forced to leave the country as a result of the April events.

Regardless of the underlying motives, these incidents again raised security as a chief concern among the Kyrgyz public.

TAJIKISTAN LIMITS ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

Suhrob Majidov

November 1 marked the beginning of electricity consumption limitations in Tajikistan. The authorities announced that from now on, the residents of the country’s cities and villages will receive no more than twelve hours of electricity in their homes. Even though limitations on energy consumption have become common practice in Tajikistan during the winter season, this year the shutdowns started earlier than usual and many residents report unequal electricity distribution. In addition, the joint stock energy holding company stated that it plans to increase tariffs on electricity in the upcoming year.

Gul Sherali, Tajikistan’s Minister of Energy, announced the beginning of the energy limitations in early November. He assured, however, that the limitations will not be applied in Dushanbe, district centers, the cities of Kulob, Nurek, Roghun, Kayrakum, Chkalovsk, Tursunzade, Sarband, and some vitally important areas in the rayon centers.

At the same time, the head of the energy holding company Barki Tojik, Abdullo Yorov, stated that energy supply will be much better this year, as the water reservoirs of the Nurek and Sangtuda-1 hydropower stations are filled to the maximum. Thus, he noted that the energy deficit this year will be two billion kilowatt-hours, while last year it was four billion kilowatt-hours.

Meanwhile, energy limitations are reportedly applied unevenly in different parts of the country. Residents of various regions of the Sughd province report receiving electricity for six to ten hours per day. In the Kurgan-Tyube district of the Khatlon province people receive electricity for eight hours a day, and energy shutdowns started already in October. In the Hissar region people also receive electricity only for eight hours. Here, however, residents report about so called “special electricity lines”, to which one can get connected against a certain payment. These are normally electricity

lines that provide secure energy supply for hospitals, clinics, state enterprises, etc. The availability and special privileges of such lines have caused discontent among many people in the country, as they are an immediate indicator of the unequal distribution of limited energy resources to those who can pay for them. Nevertheless, those who can afford such a connection surely do so.

In addition to the energy shortages the Tajik public suffers every winter, power engineering specialists suggest that the government increases tariffs on electricity in the upcoming year. According to Yorov, the proposed increase for the general population is twenty percent (i.e. US¢ 2.46/kilowatt-hour), and twenty five percent for special energy consumer categories like plants, industries, and state organizations.

In fact, Barki Tojik annually increases the tariffs for electricity by fifty percent, which it terms a measure for both implementing the reform program for the energy sector and promoting economic development. This strategy was developed in cooperation with international financial institutions. According to the holding company's management, back in 2008 these international institutions recommended Tajikistan to increase its energy tariffs by up to US¢ 2.5/kilowatt-hour by the end of 2010 to make the country's energy sector profitable and attractive to foreign investors.

This recommendation is supported by Georgiy Petrov, the head of the hydroenergy laboratory of the Institute of Water, Hydropower Engineering and Ecology of the Tajik Academy of Sciences. Petrov thinks that current tariffs should be

increased by up to US¢ 3/kilowatt-hour. Furthermore, he states that due to low tariffs, the energy holding company has to take loans for its basic needs, like technologies and maintenance. The expert also notes that energy efficiency is an acute problem in Tajikistan, which should be resolved by power engineering specialists, since "for one somoni of the product five times more is spent".

In spite of all the challenges the Tajik energy sector is currently facing, Yorov stated that "this year we will manage without energy imports, although Uzbekistan is not against providing energy supplies to our country". However, he notes that Uzbekistan's price at slightly over US¢ 4/kilowatt-hour is not acceptable for Tajikistan.

The energy system of Tajikistan is obviously not quite ready for the winter season this year. The fact that energy consumption limits are imposed earlier than usual is additional evidence of this, even though the management of the energy holding company claims that this year's energy deficit is much smaller than in previous years. Another dimension of the problem is the unequal distribution of energy supply, as perceived by many residents of Tajik towns and villages.

Last but not least, the Tajik public is concerned over the planned tariff increase on electricity. Even though local experts think that a tariff increase is a reasonable and necessary measure to improve Tajikistan's energy sector, it is very unlikely that the general population will welcome the idea as the quality and supply of electricity seemingly will not change.

OSCE SUMMIT CROWNS KAZAKH 2010 CHAIRMANSHIP

Georgiy Voloshin

The first day of December 2010 marked the start of a long-awaited high-level event for all members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The outgoing OSCE Chairman –

Kazakhstan, which is expected to pass the presidency on to Lithuania in less than a month's time, hosted on its soil the Summit of the Heads of State and Government. There has been no such

gathering in the history of the Organization since the Istanbul meeting of 1999, the conclusions of which drafted at the sunset of the previous century are widely regarded to no longer be in tune with the current political, military and economic situation in the OSCE area.

The Astana Summit saw the attendance of 38 heads of state and government, 1 vice-president, 7 deputy prime ministers, 14 ministers and multiple high-ranking officials of OSCE Member States as well as partner countries, including South Korea, Japan, Australia and Afghanistan. On November 30, Kazakhstan's Minister of foreign affairs Kanat Saudabayev, speaking at the meeting of the Bureau of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Astana, outlined the prevailing objectives of the Organization's short- and medium-term evolution.

He stressed the need to enhance arms control and confidence-building measures by updating the 1999 Vienna Document adopted by the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation in Istanbul; paid special attention to the stabilization of Afghanistan; reminded of the need to strengthen the OSCE's capacity to forecast, control and mitigate conflicts and crisis situations, and urged to ensure ethnic and religious tolerance. Saudabayev also recalled the significance of the rule of law and human rights for the development of stable and democratic societies, underlined the importance of environmental safety and spoke about boosting the OSCE's effective collaboration with other regional organizations and groupings.

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who opened the Summit on the next day, proclaimed that European and Eurasian security has become indivisible and that, unlike in the first two periods of the OSCE's development, this notion is now applicable to the whole landmass from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean. The rapprochement in Russia-NATO relations, as was noted by Nazarbayev, is a clear manifestation of this ongoing transformation. In his welcoming address, the Kazakh leader suggested increasing the number of the OSCE's "baskets" to include financial and economic security, heavily

undermined by the world financial crisis, as well as energy cooperation and stabilization of currency markets.

In Nazarbayev's view, it is of utmost importance to start working on the implementation of a new reserve currency to make the world financial system more stable and predictable. Another proposal voiced by Nazarbayev was to set up the OSCE Security Institute in Astana in order to tend to the need of early conflict prevention. Kazakhstan's President also spoke about the possibility of organizing the OSCE Environmental Forum as well as elaborating a special "Water and Law" sectoral program to make it possible for interested parties to resolve existing water disputes and establish efficient water-sharing mechanisms.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon noted Kazakhstan's successes in promoting the idea of a nuclear-free Central Asia and urged all countries to support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty adopted in 1996 but not yet ratified, as well as the UN Security Council's Resolution No. 1540 on non-proliferation. Nazarbayev, in turn, stressed the need to continue the rehabilitation of the former nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whose next stop in Central Asia was Bishkek, praised Kazakhstan's involvement in both Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan and reiterated America's unswerving support to further democratization and civil society development with the participation of local NGOs. Positive assessments of Kazakhstan's chairmanship were later given by Hamid Karzai and Roza Otunbayeva. Despite the fact that Armenia and Azerbaijan both pledged the non-use of military force in the Nagorno-Karabakh territorial dispute and the calls of the UK's Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg for a peaceful settlement in Transnistria, the Summit participants witnessed a number of unexpected comments in breach of the relatively compromise-oriented environment at the venue.

Thus, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko deplored the ambiguity of the OSCE's election

standards and complained about the absence of fair energy cooperation, referring to frequent criticism about his handling of popular votes and Russia's bargaining around the issue of gas transit. The foreign ministers of South Korea and Japan unsuccessfully appealed against North Korea's recent provocations against its southern neighbor, and Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev urged to

work out common conflict prevention procedures, citing Georgia's 2008 war with South Ossetia as an "undeclared aggression from Tbilisi."

The Summit ended with the signing of the Astana Declaration which reflected the achieved consensus on a number of topical issues but also passed over some controversial topics, such as the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia inside Georgia.

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONAL GAS & OIL BUSINESS FORUM HELD IN TURKMENISTAN

Tavus Rejepova

On November 17-19, Turkmenistan held its major annual Gas & Oil Conference, inviting over 400 participants including the representatives of over 160 international business companies, scientists and technical experts to seek new ways to develop the country's gas and oil industry.

The ITE Group Plc, with headquarters in London and an organizer of leading business conferences and exhibitions in growing and developing markets, held this year's conference in Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat in collaboration with the Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry and Mineral Resources of Turkmenistan. Along with the business forum, the respective ministries of the gas and oil industry of Turkmenistan and foreign companies organized an exhibition in the Sergi Palace displaying new technologies for exploration, extraction and transportation of hydrocarbon resources.

As reported by the State News Agency of Turkmenistan (TDH), the conference attracted major companies such as the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Petronas, Dragon Oil, Wintershall, Gazprom, Stroitransgas, Tatneft, Integra, Komatsu Ltd., German electric power and natural gas company RWE, British Petroleum (BP), Austria's largest oil producing, refining and gas station operating company OMV, Chevron, Total, ExxonMobil, Shell and many others. In the forum

agenda, special attention was given to attracting more investment and rapid development of the chemical sector, and new gas and oil fields in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea. The Turkmen State News Service (TDH) has earlier reported that the three U.S. oil companies Chevron, ConocoPhillips and TXOil, as well as Abu Dhabi's Mubadala, were to be designated as the preferred bidders for tenders to explore two blocks in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea. In addition, the Turkmen authorities also set out new priorities for the expansion of domestic and international transport infrastructure as well as education and training of Turkmen nationals in the gas and oil industry.

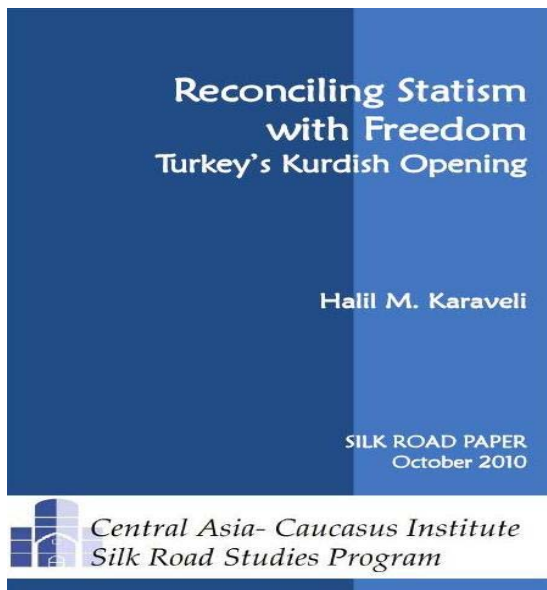
Addressing the delegates at the Gas & Oil conference, the First Deputy Prime Minister Baymurad Khojamukhamedov was quoted by RIA Novosti as saying that Turkmenistan is ready to provide 40 billion cubic meters of natural gas to the EU-backed Nabucco pipeline project. He further noted that a key internal East-West pipeline is currently being constructed to connect Turkmenistan's major gas fields to the envisioned Nabucco project and also assured Turkmenistan's energy partners that the country possesses sufficient gas deposits to be able to meet its supply needs apart from domestic consumption.

The conference was regarded as successful as the level of interest in Turkmenistan's oil and gas market is growing among major foreign investors willing to do business in the country. Apart from being a dynamic platform for participating delegations to establish mutually beneficial contacts, the event also signaled a new tendency or increased desire of Turkmen authorities for 'investment openness' and commitment to develop and implement new projects with international companies.

The timing of the Gas & Oil Conference coincidentally matched the time of the third Caspian Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, where the heads of five littoral states were meeting to reach an Agreement on Security Cooperation in the Caspian Sea and possible consensus on the legal status of the Sea. As the Turkmen authorities were considering potential investment opportunities at the business forum in Ashgabat, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov flew to Baku to lay out Turkmenistan's position on specific issues such as

constructing pipelines on the Caspian seabed. "Turkmenistan is firmly convinced that underwater pipelines in the Caspian Sea should be built only with the consent of those countries, across whose sections of the seabed pipelines will be built" said the president at the summit.

Though there is yet no formal agreement involving Turkmenistan and EU partners over Nabucco, calling for investment to develop the Turkmen sector of the Caspian offshore gas and oil fields, recent Turkish-Turkmen negotiations to purchase Turkmen gas and also Berdimuhammedov's statements at the Caspian Summit indicate that Turkmenistan is steadily moving to reach out the European energy market. The fact that Turkmenistan's Caspian Sea neighbors acquiesced to build a pipeline on the seabed at the Caspian Summit in Baku further strengthens Turkmenistan's position to diversify its energy export routes apart from its already existing gas pipelines to Russia, Iran, China and the envisioned TAPI to Pakistan and India.



New Silk Road Paper:

***Reconciling Statism with Freedom: Turkey's
Kurdish Opening***

By Halil M. Karaveli

The Silk Road Paper can be downloaded
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Hardcopy requests should be addressed to
Paulette Fung at caciz@jhu.edu.

NEWS DIGEST

KAZAKH, TAJIK OFFICIALS DISCUSS ENERGY

24 November

Tajik Prime Minister Oqil Oqilov said Kazakhstan and Tajikistan will expand bilateral trade, including energy. Oqilov, speaking at a news conference in Dushanbe, said: "Today Kazakhstan holds the leading position among CIS countries in terms of foreign trade with Tajikistan. Trade between our countries increased by 5.7 percent in the first 10 months of this year as compared to (the same period of) last year. "We have discussed cooperation in power engineering and agreed our stances on the use of water balance; this is a sensitive issue. I think we will come to a decision which will satisfy all the countries in the region on the issue." Oqilov made his comments following a meeting with Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Masimov and his delegation, Interfax-Kazakhstan news agency reported Wednesday. In addition to energy issues, Oqilov said the sides had discussed during the talks prospects for cooperation in topics including "food security, including long-term supplies of grain from Kazakhstan to Tajikistan, a range of issues on military cooperation and cooperation in tourism." (UPI)

U.N.: AFGHAN FARMERS NEED OPIUM SUBSISTENCE

27 November

The new chief of the United Nations' anti-drug campaign said Saturday Afghan farmers must be helped to switch from opium to legal crops. Russian diplomat Yuri Fedotov, director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, visited Kabul and met with President Hamid Karzai to discuss drug production and trafficking, RIA Novosti reported. "We must ensure that Afghan farmers will have access to markets and conditions for normal agricultural production," Fedotov said. "We have to provide Afghan farmers a chance and opportunity to fend for their families, without planting poppy." Fedotov said a few weeks ago his agency would carry out a

new drug strategy in Afghanistan. Afghan drug production jumped after the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, and Russia has been plagued by rising heroin consumption. Russia estimates 90 percent of its heroin comes from Afghanistan via Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Russia has long criticized NATO's efforts to stem the traffic. (UPI)

OSCE TO SEND SCALED-BACK MISSION TO KYRGYZSTAN

29 November

An Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) official says Europe's main rights watchdog will send a scaled-down police mission to Kyrgyzstan early next year after postponing its deployment due to security threats. Herbert Salber, director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center, told Reuters in an interview that the OSCE planned to send 30 to 31 unarmed policemen to Kyrgyzstan in early 2011. Most of the policemen would be deployed in the south of the country, where clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks killed more than 400 people in June. The OSCE had earlier planned to send a 52-member police mission this year. The main task of the OSCE police would be to help local police and to rebuild inter-ethnic trust. Salber also said that Central Asian states should be able to fight the twin threats of Islamist militancy and ethnic violence without abandoning human rights. He was speaking in the Kazakh capital Astana, where the 56-member OSCE holds its first summit since 1999 on December 1-2. (RFE/RL)

AZERI ENERGY COMPANY EXAMINES GREEN FUTURE

1 December

Azerbaijan's state oil company has plans to roll out its own agenda to tackle climate change, an Azeri leader said at an energy conference in Baku. Soltan Aliyev, the vice president for ecological affairs in Azerbaijan, said on the sidelines of an energy summit for Caspian oil and gas companies in Baku that his country was eager to embrace climate

challenges. The State Oil Co. of Azerbaijan, he said, would approve a unilateral climate change strategy on the heels of the energy summit, the Trend news agency reports. In general, he said, SOCAR aimed to cut the amount of gas emitted into the atmosphere and adopt strategies to incorporate alternative energy resources into its business agenda. He added that the state energy company was working on ways to cut the amount of gas emissions released during production at the Guneshli oil and gas field in the Caspian Sea. (UPI)

AZERBAIJAN URGES ARMENIA TO CONTINUE TALKS ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH

1 December

Azerbaijani President Ilkham Aliyev urged Armenia to continue peace talks on Nagorno-Karabakh. "Azerbaijan, as before, will remain committed to peace talks, hoping that they will bear fruit," Aliyev said at the OSCE summit in Astana on Wednesday, December 1. He stressed that Azerbaijan "is ready to continue the talks and finish them as soon as possible and reach such a result that will be based on the rules and principles of international law, within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity." Aliyev stressed that "Azerbaijan will never allow the initial process to become open-ended and endless." "We are engaged in negotiations in order to get our land freed. We are conducting them in order to restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan recognised by the international community," he said. The president expressed hope that the entities and mediators dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would "have their categorical say." "The time has long been ripe for that. Otherwise, these negotiations will be completely senseless. Negotiations are conducted for a result, not for its semblance," Aliyev said. He said, "The Karabakh conflict is a real threat to region." The head of state called for a speedy and fair settlement in Karabakh on the basis of international law. "We understand that major states want the region to live in peace and stability, without war. We want that too. But this does not mean that the conflict should remain frozen," he said. Aliyev said he was hoping "positive tendencies" in the negotiations. The president said earlier that the Karabakh talks were in "a crucial stage." "Negotiations over the past five to six years have led to the drafting of proposals on the settlement, which were officially presented to the parties to the conflict by international mediators

- co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. These proposals are balanced and can lead to a peaceful settlement of the problem within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity," Aliyev said. The mediators' proposals call for "freeing the occupied Azerbaijani territories, returning refugees to their homeland, deploying peacekeeping troops in the region for security reasons, and opening a corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh," Aliyev said. Speaking of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh, he said it was "a matter of the future." "We have said many times that we will never agree to any status for Nagorno-Karabakh outside Azerbaijan, and international law supports our positions," the president said. (Itar-Tass)

OSCE SUMMIT IN ASTANA

1 December

Heads of state and high-level diplomats from the 56 OSCE member countries are gathered in Astana, Kazakhstan for a two-day summit, which is the first of this type since 1999 Istanbul summit. The Astana Summit on December 1-2 brought together 38 heads of states and governments, and other senior officials - Georgian and Russian Presidents, Mikheil Saakashvili and Dmitri Medvedev, respectively, among them. Georgian diplomats said "a very intensive and difficult" work was ongoing in Astana on the draft of final declaration of the summit - OSCE decision-making process requires the consensus of all 56 member states. "It will be very difficult to reach a consensus, taking into consideration the fact that the country [Russia] with which we have tense relations is also an OSCE member. A very difficult work is underway in Astana right now on the draft of final document," Nino Kalandadze, the Georgian deputy foreign minister, said in Tbilisi on November 30. Grigol Vashadze, the Georgian foreign minister, told Georgian reporters in Astana, that Tbilisi would not support a text if it failed to reflect Georgia's interests. Meanwhile, in his speech at summit on Wednesday morning the French Prime Minister, François Fillon, reiterated support to Georgia's territorial integrity and called "on the parties" to fully implement August 12 and September 8, 2008 ceasefire agreements. "We salute the solemn undertaking given by the President of Georgia before the European Parliament to refrain from the use of force and we call on all the parties to accept this open hand," the French PM said. (Civil Georgia)

OSCE MEETINGS FOCUSED ON SECURITY**1 December**

Security for European and Asian communities is more than just a regional metaphor, the president of Kazakhstan said at the launch of an OSCE summit in Astana. Delegates to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the largest security body in the world, gathered Wednesday in Astana to discuss pressing security matters. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev opened the congress, the first in 11 years, by calling the meeting a "triumph of common sense." He said the summit was an important opportunity to strengthen trust across the international community as it works to build interstate structures. "Eurasian security is not a metaphor, it is a strict geopolitical fact," he said in a statement. "Therefore, the summit in Astana is a good opportunity to analyze the OSCE's prospects in global security." Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, the secretary-general of the OSCE, said the meeting was a "historic opportunity" to readdress arms control discussions and improve confidence-building measures across the 56 participating members. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton laid out a long list of concerns, from open democracies to the conflict in Afghanistan. She said summits like the one in Astana gave participating states the opportunity to tackle multidimensional challenges. "Our goal here in Astana should be to move forward on democracy, human rights, economic growth, and strengthening our security community," she said in her statement. (UPI)

ETHNIC UZBEK JAILED FOR LIFE FOR KILLING DOCTOR IN KYRGYZ CLASHES**3 December**

An ethnic Uzbek has been jailed for life after being found guilty of killing a doctor during ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan in June, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. Oktamjan Sulaimanov was found guilty of killing of Osh Oblast Pediatric Clinic physician Kasymbek Jusupakmatov during the clashes between local Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. Sulaimanov, 44, pleaded guilty. The court also ordered his property be confiscated and Sulaimanov to pay the equivalent of \$10,500 to the relatives of the victim. Jusupakmatov went missing after he was forcibly taken out of his house on June 16. His body was found two weeks later in neighboring Uzbekistan. He was indentified by his dentist. Jusupakmatov's colleague Dastan Jolboldieva told RFE/RL that the slain physician was 40 and left a wife and a son behind. Some 400 people were killed

and hundreds were wounded during the June clashes in Kyrgyzstan's southern regions of Osh and Jalal-Abad. (RFE/RL)

OSCE TACKLES "THORNY" ISSUES IN ASTANA**3 December**

Leaders at an OSCE summit in Kazakhstan agreed that while security is interconnected, each state has the right to make its own decisions, a declaration reads. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev hosted delegates at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the first such meeting for the alliance in 11 years. The president said member states agreed to back a comprehensive approach to trust and transparency in economic, political and military affairs. "We intend to raise the level and quality of security and understanding between our states and peoples," he said in a statement. Leaders at the OSCE summit agreed on a declaration that reaffirmed the core principles for security of the member states. The declaration in part noted that security for OSCE members is "inseparably linked" though each state maintains the right "to choose or change its security arrangements, including treaties of alliance, as they evolve." Nursultan said, however, that the road to a true partnership would be "long and thorny." Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, who takes over the OSCE chairmanship in 2011, said the goal of the OSCE is to enhance the influence of democracy "where all the commitments are implemented, the use of force is unthinkable and human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully respected." (UPI)

RUSSIA, SOUTH OSSETIA SIGN INVESTMENT PROGRAM FOR 2011**3 December**

Russia will assign 6.8 billion roubles (USD 1 = RUB 31.26) for the social and economic development of the Republic of South Ossetia in 2011. The fund is envisaged by an investment program, which was signed by Russian Minister of Regional Development Viktor Basargin and South Ossetian Prime Minister Vadim Brovtsev in Tskhinval on Friday. The sides also signed a document regulating the interaction between the Russian Ministry of Regional Development and an appropriate body of South Ossetia for the implementation of the above-mentioned program. During a meeting with South Ossetian President Eduard Kokoity, Basargin voiced confidence that all agreements between Russia and South Ossetia will be implemented and the living

standards of the republic's population will improve. Kokoity, in turn, thanked Russia for the assistance. "We saw which problems Russia faced during the economic crisis and natural calamities. But the country met all of its commitments," he said. Kokoity presented a medal to the Russian minister of regional development on the occasion of South Ossetia's 20th anniversary. The minister was bestowed with the medal "for the great contribution in the development of friendly relations and assistance in the reconstruction of the republic after Georgia's aggression." (Itar-Tass)

PRESIDENT ROZA OTUNBAYEVA ASSIGNS CREATION OF COALITION TO RESPUBLIKA PARTY

4 December

President Roza Otunbayeva of Kyrgyzstan has assigned the creation of a parliamentary majority coalition to the Respublika Party, a representative of the press service of the Kyrgyz president told Itar-Tass on Saturday. "The Respublika Party has been assigned to create a coalition in accordance with the Kyrgyz legislation," the Kyrgyz official said. Omurbek Babanov, leader of the Respublika Party, was given 15 working days for its creation. If the Respublika Party fails to fulfil the task, the MPs will have the right to create a coalition on their own. Otherwise the recently elected parliament will be dissolved, and new elections will be held in the country. Some time ago Ms. Otunbayeva assigned the Social Democratic Party, led by Almazbek Atambayev, to create a majority coalition. The Respublika Party and the Ata-Meken (Fatherland) Party joined the Social Democrats. During the election of a speaker the coalition suggested Omurbek Tekebayev, leader of Ata-Meken. He was not supported by the MPs, however, and it was announced on the next day that the coalition was breaking up. The parliamentary elections were held in Kyrgyzstan on October 10, this year. 29 political parties were vying for 120 seats in a new parliament, but only five of them managed to overcome the 5 per cent barrier. These included the Ata-Zhurt (Native Land) Party (28 seats), the Social Democratic Party (26 seats), Ar-Namys (Dignity) Party (25 seats), the Respublika Party (23 seats) and the Ata-Meken Party (18 seats). (Itar-Tass)

IRAN WANTS MORE OF TURKMENISTAN'S GAS

6 December

Iran aims to receive more natural gas from Turkmenistan through a pipeline straddling their shared border, Iranian export officials said. Iran and Turkmenistan inaugurated the 75-mile second phase of a natural gas pipeline between the countries. The pipeline expands gas imports from Turkmenistan from 700 million cubic feet per day to 1.76 billion cfd. The pipeline services the mountainous north of Iran, which sees expanded industrial needs during winter months. Tehran said the pipeline also increased the export potential for European countries. Ashgar Sohilipour, a top Iranian gas export official, told the Oil Ministry's Petroenergy Information Network that Tehran was keen to get more gas from Turkmenistan. "Iran is in talks with Turkmenistan on increasing gas imports," he was quoted as saying. He added that Iran's neighbors in the Persian Gulf could get more gas if Iran and Turkmenistan can enhance their reputation as an energy hub using the bilateral pipeline. (UPI)

SYRIA TO IMPORT FIRST GAS FROM AZERBAIJAN IN 2011, DEPUTY MINISTER SAYS

6 December

Syria will start importing natural gas from Azerbaijan next year, under a new agreement between the two nations, Syrian Deputy Minister of Oil Hasan Zainab said. Syria will import about 3.5 million cubic meters of gas a day, Zainab said in a telephone interview from Damascus today. Syria and Azerbaijan signed a final agreement on technical details of the purchase during a visit by Syrian oil officials to Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, on Nov. 23. Zainab expects imports to start by the end of 2011, though the exact date would depend on the completion of a pipeline between Syria and Turkey, through which the gas would be shipped, he said. Infrastructure work on the Syrian portion of the pipeline is set for completion in March, while Turkey is due to finish preparations on its side of the border by the end of 2011, Zainab said. The pipeline would add to a regional network connecting Syria with Turkey, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Europe. Syria currently imports around 1.5 million cubic meters of gas a day, all of it from Egypt, Zainab said. The government expects to boost its production of both gas and oil this year and has raised its estimated gas reserves, Oil Minister Sufian Alao said on Nov. 22 in

Damascus. He did not provide figures or details. Syria had proven oil reserves of 2.5 billion barrels at the end of 2009 and is the smallest gas holder among the nine Middle Eastern countries listed in BP Plc's statistical review for last year. (Bloomberg)

BRITISH LEADER SAYS TROOPS COULD START LEAVING AFGHANISTAN IN 2011

7 December

British Prime Minister David Cameron says his country's troops may begin to leave Afghanistan as early as 2011. Cameron made his comments today during a surprise visit to Afghanistan, as U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates also flew into the country. Cameron spoke at Camp Bastion, the British military base in the volatile southern Afghan province of Helmand where the prime minister began his Afghan visit on December 6. Helmand is where the bulk of Britain's 9,500-strong Afghanistan contingent is serving. The British prime Minister today also held bilateral talks with President Hamid Karzai in the capital, Kabul. More than 340 British troops have so far died in Afghanistan, and a recent rise in casualties has added to the war's unpopularity at home. Since taking office, Cameron has backed a plan to bring all British combat troops home from Afghanistan by 2015. He previously said his government has scaled back British ambitions in Afghanistan and has warned of declining public support for the war there. In a joint press conference with the Afghan president in Kabul, Cameron said that "real progress" made this year in the nine-year conflict in Afghanistan must be made "irreversible" in 2011. "I have seen for myself the progress that we are making in Helmand Province," Cameron said. "I have discussed with President Karzai the plan for handing over responsibility to Afghan forces and our long-term relationship between our two countries. And we also discussed our shared priorities for 2011, which we must make a decisive year in this campaign." Cameron said that London and Kabul would work together on a new long-term partnership that would "set out in black and white the ways in which we will support you politically, economically, and militarily." The two leaders also put on a joint front in the wake of leaked U.S. diplomatic cables that revealed criticism of British operations in Afghanistan. A November 2008 cable made public by the WikiLeaks website said that Washington and Karzai "agree the British are not up to the task of securing Helmand." The cables also quoted senior Afghan officials as expressing grave doubts over British willingness to really take on the

insurgents. Karzai today, however, brushed such disagreements aside. "The WikiLeaks documents are having some truth and some not-so-truth in them," Karzai said. "Britain has been a steadfast supporter of Afghanistan and of the Afghan people. Britain has contributed in the sacrifice of its soldiers, of blood and of resources in Afghanistan, for which the Afghan people are extremely grateful." (RFE/RL)

KAZAKH GOVERNMENT APPROVES DRAFT AGREEMENT ON CES MARKETS OF OIL/GAS

7 December

The Kazakh government has approved the draft agreement on setting up the common markets of oil and gas within the framework of the Common Economic Space (CES). "This agreement gives priority in meeting the demand for oil and petroleum products in the CES countries (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan). It guarantees the transportation of oil and petroleum products between them on equitable terms for all the economic entities," Kazakh Minister of Oil and Gas Lyazzat Kiinov said. Kiinov noted that the CES would have the uniform norms and standards of oil and petroleum products between the countries and a system of information support of the common markets of oil and petroleum products. (Itar-Tass)

ASHGABAT LAUDS BENEFITS OF TAPI PIPELINE

7 December

Building a natural gas pipeline through Afghanistan could help stabilize the war-torn country, the government in Turkmenistan declared. Western allies are backing a natural gas pipeline stretching from Turkmenistan to India. The government in Ashgabat said construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline was of "tremendous significance" to the region, the Trend News Agency reports. The government said TAPI wouldn't only give Turkmenistan more export options but would also help build trade and economic relations for Afghanistan. The pipeline was on the agenda during weekend talks in Kabul between the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The 1,043-mile natural gas pipeline would transport natural gas from Turkmenistan. The Western-backed project is viewed as a rival to Iran's plans to transit natural gas from its South Pars gas field to Pakistan and India through the so-called Peace Pipeline. The TAPI pipeline would move natural

gas from the Dauletabad field in Turkmenistan, which holds more than 40 trillion cubic feet of gas. (UPI)

U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY ARRIVES IN ISTANBUL

7 December

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has arrived in Afghanistan for talks with commanders and Afghan President Hamid Karzai. His unannounced trip comes ahead of a review of U.S. military policy in Afghanistan due for completion next week. The review will gauge whether last year's surge of an additional 30,000 soldiers to Afghanistan, ordered by U.S. President Barack Obama, in order to train Afghans to take control of their own security is working to suppress the insurgency. There are now 150,000 coalition forces in Afghanistan, over half of them American. The United States and its NATO partners agreed last month to begin turning over control to local Afghan authorities in 2011, with a goal of completing the transition by the end of 2014. (RFE/RL)

SAAKASHVILI: 'VERY SERIOUS TERROR ATTACKS PREVENTED'

7 December

President Saakashvili said on December 7 that with the arrest of six suspects behind series of recent explosions in Georgia, the law enforcement agencies helped to prevent "serious terror attacks." "The Georgian police arrested a group [of people] suspected of dangerous crime, the group, which is accused of committing several very dangerous acts, in particular explosions at the Georgian railway, [explosion] in the vicinity of the U.S. embassy and outside one of the opposition party's office, which led to death of a woman," Saakashvili said in televised remarks before departure to Mexico. "All the evidence available to our law enforcement agencies indicate that these people [perpetrators] were acting from the occupied territory," he said. The Georgian Interior Ministry said that the key suspect was acting under the instructions of a Russian military officer, serving in breakaway Abkhazia. Georgian Deputy Interior Minister, Eka Zguladze, said that Georgia would like to cooperate with "any party", including with Russia, in the process of investigation. "We are ready to cooperate with any party and we hope that in case of a constructive approach by relevant Russian agencies we will be able to question others involved in the case," Zguladze said. President Saakashvili also said

that evidence available for now, including explosive devices confiscated during searches at home of one of the suspects, indicated that "we have managed to prevent very serious terror attacks." "These terrorist acts were planned in advance and perpetrators were given both instructions and explosives... I want to thank our law enforcement agencies, our police and I want to call on them to further intensify their work," Saakashvili said. (Civil Georgia)

RUSSIA, AFGHANISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, PAKISTAN AGREE ON ANTI-DRUG FIGHT

8 December

The heads of the Russian, Afghan, Pakistani and Tajik anti-drug agencies signed in Moscow on Wednesday a joint statement on setting up a Central Asian anti-drug quartet. "We stated unanimously that Afghanistan will not cope with that problem alone," the head of the Russian Federal Anti-Drug Service, Viktor Ivanov, said. According to him, the Afghan people have become the same prisoner of the situation as the people who have suffered from drugs in other countries. "The format of our four-party cooperation is extremely important. We have vast potentials for to jointly boosting fight against drug trafficking," Ivanov stressed. "Unfortunately, NATO which has rather big forces in Afghanistan, does not take efficient measures to destroy drug production," Ivanov added. He also noted that "no place for fixing the problem of drug production in Afghanistan" was found in the NATO strategy approved in Lisbon on November 19. In accordance with the signed memorandum, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan agree to "exchange strategic information on channels of drug trafficking and people involved in illegal drug trafficking," "to develop a mechanism for planning and carrying out a special operation to liquidate drug crops and drug laboratories", to exchange experience and to cooperate on reducing the demand for drugs. The heads of the anti-drug agencies have agreed to meet yearly. The next meeting is scheduled for the first half of 2011. (Itar-Tass)

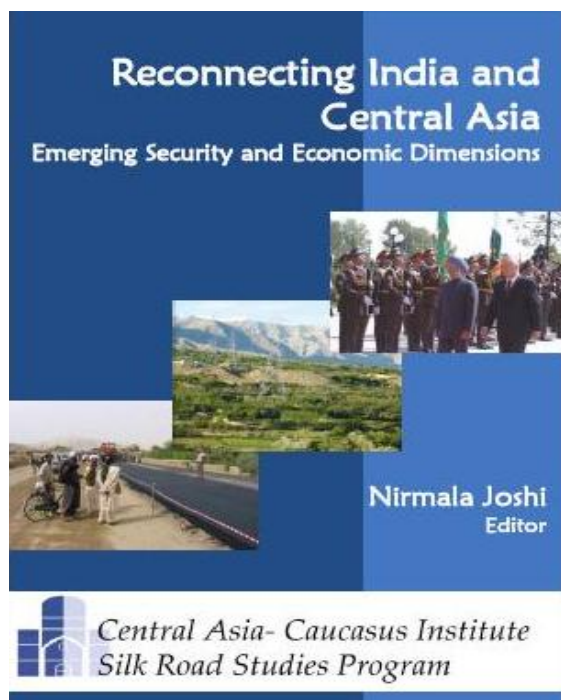
RF, KAZAKHSTAN AGREE TO CREATE COMMON AIR DEFENSE REGIONAL SYSTEM

8 December

Russia and Kazakhstan will create a common air defence regional system, Kazakhstani Air Force Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Alexander Sorokin said. "We agreed to create a

common air defence regional system, which will be similar to the Russian-Belarusian system,” the Kazakhstani general told journalists on Wednesday. “The creation of the common system will help us strengthen the common defence space. Kazakhstan’s air defence will take full responsibility for covering Russia’s airspace along the border with Kazakhstan,” General Sorokin said. “The common air defence system will facilitate supplies of Russian air defence missile weapon systems to Kazakhstan,” the commander-in-chief said. He declined to elaborate. “Kazakhstan seeks to acquire the newest Russian S-400 Triumph air defence mobile defence systems. But we understand that at first Russia should be armed by these systems,” General Sorokin said. Russian Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said he hopes for a serious breakthrough in military cooperation with Kazakhstan. Serdyukov said Russia “hopes for a serious breakthrough in military cooperation with Kazakhstan in 2011”. “I believe that the expiring year was very successful for our military

cooperation. In 2011 we wait for a serious breakthrough. During today’s talks, we’ve discussed a wide range of issues,” the Russian minister stressed. Kazakhstani Defence Minister Adilbek Dzhaksybekov said, “We’ve arrived to you as brothers in arms. I hope that our meeting will be open and informal.” He noted, “Today’s meeting preceded the talks between experts. The need arose to have talks on different issues and determine further trends to strengthen cooperation.” Russia will supply an S-300 air defence missile system to Kazakhstan, a spokeswoman for the Russian Defence Minister said. “In order to safeguard the common defence area, the parties to the talks discussed possible supplies of S-300 missile systems to Kazakhstan. Currently, work is underway to draft relevant contract documents,” said Irina Kovalchuk. There are no immediate details of the would-be deal. Russia and Kazakhstan are partners within the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and enjoy preferences in the area of mutual arms supplies. (Itar-Tass)



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